

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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TAGS:PFOR, RH

SUBJECT: PRESS ITEMS ON GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA

1. IN LEAD ARTICLE IN OCTOBER 30 WASHINGTON POST, DON OBERDORFER WRITES THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER DELIVERED STRONG WARNING AGAINST SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS TO AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN AT LENGTHY BREAKFAST MEETING OCTOBER 29. ACCORDING TO OBERDORFER, SECRETARY REPORTEDLY TOLD DOBRYNIN THAT MISCHIEVOUS SOVIET ROLE IN AFRICA AT THIS TIME COULD ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS EFFORT TO INFLICT MAXIMUM DAMAGE ON WEST, AND THAT CHAOS IN AFRICA WOULD NOT BENEFIT SOVIETS IN LONG RUN. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT SOVIETS ARE BEHIND INCREASED INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN RHODESIA SINCE LATE SEPTEMBER, OBERDORFER SAYS US OFFICIALS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT SOVIETS MAY USE SUCH METHODS TO INTERFERE WITH RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

2. DAVID OTTAWAY WRITES THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE ADJOURNED UNEXPECTEDLY TO GIVE BRITAIN TIME TO CONSULT PRIVATELY WITH WHITE AND BLACK DELEGATIONS TO FIND A WAY OUT OF LOOMING IMPASSE THREATENING TALKS. HE RECOUNTS INSISTENCE ON PART OF NATIONALISTS THAT TALKS BE TURNED INTO FULL-
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FLEDGED CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AND SUBSEQUENT REJECTION

OF THIS IDEA BY RHODESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER BYL. DEADLOCK OVER KISSINGER PLAN, WRITES OTTAWAY, IS BELIEVED TO BE MAIN REASON FOR DISPATCH OF ASST. SECRETARY SCHAUFLE TO GENEVA. OTTAWAY GOES ON TO GIVE LENGTHY ACCOUNT OF MUZOREWA'S OPENING STATEMENT, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR ELECTING PRIME MINISTER OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT, WHICH OTTAWAY CHARACTERIZED AS EFFORT BY MUZOREWA TO PROMOTE HIS OWN ELECTION AS FIRST BLACK PRIME MINISTER.

3. IN SPECIAL TO POST, ROBIN WRIGHT REPORTS FROM SALISBURY THAT ATTENTION OF WHITE RHODESIANS HAS FOCUSED AS MUCH ON INCREASING TERRORISM AS ON GENEVA TALKS. WRIGHT CITES REPORTS BY RHODESIAN OFFICIALS INDICATING THAT LEVEL OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY HAS NEARLY DOUBLED SINCE SMITH SPEECH ON SEPTEMBER 24, NUMBER OF INSURGENTS OPERATING IN RHODESIA HAS RISEN TO 3,000 AND INCIDENTS NO LONGER CONFINED TO BORDER AREAS. A MORE OMINOUS FACTOR, WRIGHT SAYS, IS DECLINING MORALE AMONG WHITE TROOPS AND REPORTED RELUCTANCE OF MANY TO CONTINUE FIGHTING NOW THAT BLACK RULE SEEMS INEVITABLE. WRIGHT ALSO NOTES THE APPEARANCE, COINCIDING WITH OPENING OF GENEVA TALKS, OF ZIPA LEAFLETS ASSERTING THAT INSURGENTS WILL FIGHT ON FOR TOTAL SEIZURE OF STATE POWER AND WILL ACCEPT NO COMPROMISE ON THAT ISSUE.

4. WRITING IN OCTOBER 30 NEW YORK TIMES, BERNARD WEINTRAUB ALSO RECOUNTS NATIONALISTS' DEMAND THAT BRITAIN ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RAPID TRANSFER OF POWER TO AFRICAN MAJORITY, WITH RELEVANT QUOTES FROM OPENING SPEECHES BY NKOMO AND MUGABE. WEINTRAUB CHARACTERIZES MUZOREWA'S ADDRESS AS STRONGEST AND MOST DETAILED, PARTICULARLY ITS CATALOGING OF "BRUTAL ATROCITIES" AGAINST CIVILIAN POPULATION. WEINTRAUB REPORTS THAT DESPITE ANGER REVEALED IN NATIONALISTS' BITTER CONDEMNATION OF SMITH REGIME, CHAIRMAN IVOR RICHARD LATER TOLD PRESS THAT HE WAS "EXTREMELY IMPRESSED" WITH OPENING STATEMENTS: "TO BE BRUTALLY FRANK, IT WENT VERY MUCH BE BETTER THAN I FEARED IT WAS GOING TO GO." KISSINGER
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